

FOURTH OF JULY MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT OBAMA

On Independence Day, we celebrate a small, audacious group of patriots who, in signing a declaration, ignited a revolution and made us free. Believing in a democracy they had never known, the patriots of 1776 did not fight to replace the tyranny of a king with the privileges of a few or the rule of a mob. They created a government of, by, and for the people, entrusting each generation to keep safe our founding creed.

Two hundred and thirty-seven years later, their words are just as bold and revolutionary as they were when they were first inscribed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

But while these truths may be self-evident, history tells us they have never been self-executing. For more than two centuries, our Nation has been on an enduring journey to bridge the meaning of our Founders' words with the realities of our time. Through blood drawn by lash and sword, we learned no Union founded on the principles of liberty and equality can survive half-slave and half-free. We determined a modern economy requires railroads and highways to speed travel and commerce. We learned education is central to a free society and discovered a free market only thrives when there are rules to ensure fair play. We resolved that a great Nation must care for the vulnerable and protect its people from life's worst hazards and misfortunes.

And when our way of life has been challenged and tested, brave members of our Armed Forces have stepped forward to defend our convictions at home and abroad. From the Minutemen who fought for a Nation still only an idea to the proud men and women who serve in uniform today, our service members make the great experiment of America possible. Today, we also honor their extraordinary sacrifice, and we pay tribute to those who gave their last full measure of devotion so we might live free.

On this day, we celebrate our founding creed that what binds this Nation together is not the colors of our skin, the tenets of our faith, or the origins of our name. What makes us American is our allegiance to an idea first declared in a spare hall in Philadelphia—that all of us are created equal. This idea guides us still, and calls on us to carry into an uncertain future the precious light of freedom.

I wish you all the best for a happy Fourth of July. May God bless and protect all those who serve, and may God bless the United States of America.

Barack Obama